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DIE ENTSTEHUNG DES JUDENTHUMS. Eine historische Untersuchung von EDUARD MEYER. Halle a. S.: Max Niemeyer, 1896. Pp. viii+245, and a map; 8vo. M 6.

IN this monograph the distinguished historian of "antiquity" has performed a signal service to biblical criticism and to the study of the most important of all national histories. Its aim, to use the author's words, is to prepare a foundation for a genetic historical sketch of Judaism by methodically examining and sifting the material for the history of its origin. It has grown out of the series of studies which the author had to undertake as preparatory to Vol. III of his monumental *Geschichte des Alterthums*. A variety of occasions have led to unanticipated breadth and depth of treatment, and have thus added to the interest and value of the results. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the importance of Meyer's subject. The period was that of the regeneration and reorganization of the *reliquiæ* of ancient Israel into the Jewish church and commonwealth. It was also that of the great political and social upheaval and readjustment which made the transition from Semitism to Aryanism in western Asia. The Hebrew records, especially Ezra and Nehemiah, contain material which pretty fully describes the former, while it essentially illustrates the latter. If these records may be used as they stand they constitute an inestimable authority.

But the question has been of late years pressing itself, whether the writings in question may be properly so utilized. They consist partly of personal memoirs, and partly of copies of official documents, which are in themselves sources of the first class for historical construction. But they have manifestly been edited much later by a compiler, apparently identical with the Chronicler, who lived about 300 B. C. It has long been felt that the whole matter of the books requires a thorough testing. It is generally conceded that whatever materials lay before the Chronicler he has freely worked them over, expanding, omitting, condensing, transposing. But the reliability of the framework of the narrative was not seriously impugned till, in 1893, Kusters, in his *Herstel van Israel in het Perzische Tijdvak*, attempted to show that while portions of the later history, relating to Ezra and Nehemiah, are trustworthy in the main, the account of the return is fictitious, the attempts to rebuild the temple having been made by Hebrews who remained in the country under Zerubbabel and Joshua. This hypothesis has had wide currency. It has been largely adopted in Holland and Germany; some of Kusters' most important conclusions have been

accepted by Cheyne in England; and in *Beiheft II*, of *ZATW* (1896), Dr. C. C. Torrey, of Andover, follows up the attack by renouncing the Chronicler and all his works except the personal memoirs of Nehemiah (chaps. 1—6).

The gist of the problem may be shown by a statement of what Meyer takes as his task in the present essay. As an historian he is, in the first place, rightly displeased at the attitude of current Old Testament criticism towards the Aramaic original documents of the Book of Ezra. Not only Kusters and his followers, but Nöldeke and Stade also, declare that these are spurious, containing at best but a distorted picture of what was really done at the periods in question. He finds that they, and in fact most recent critics, have put these records aside without special examination because they do not agree with their presuppositions as to the actual course of events. He finds, for example, Stade saying that the author has perhaps imagined the contents of the letters that passed between the Persian officials and the Great King, referring to "the well-known habits of ancient writers" in such matters. Against this, Meyer protests that he knows of no such habits of ancient authors, that they "transferred the language of important documents to their own texts just as accurately as do our modern historians" (p. 2, note). Meyer therefore proposes to begin with an examination of these sources, and thus determine whether we are at liberty to set up hypotheses as to the matters of fact, or whether the alleged facts are attested by original documents, which in this case must serve as the basis of all attempts at reconstruction (p. 5). A study of these records (Ezra, chaps. 4—7) therefore forms the subject of chap. I (pp. 8—71). This begins with a highly instructive examination of the language in which they are written. The use of the much suspected Aramaic is shown to be not only possible, but necessary. A spurious document, like Ezra 1 : 2—5, would have been written by the Chronicler in Hebrew, but instructions such as these of the Persian kings, intended especially for the western provinces of the empire, must have been either accompanied by an Aramaic translation or have been penned originally in that tongue, which was for that region the official language as long ago as the time of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18 : 26). For example, in the memorial of Rehum (Ezra 4 : 8 ff.), according to the emendation of Meyer, we must render, "And the dispatch was written in Persian, and translated into Aramaic," the point being that the Chronicler felt himself able to give its exact wording, having access to it in an Aramaic translation. As parallel to this proceeding the

instructions of Darius I to the Persian official Gadatas in Magnesia, on the Mæander, is cited (p. 19 f.). In this document, also, the clumsy Greek betrays the work of a translator from the Persian. So with the answer of the Great King to Rehum (4 : 17 ff.), the decree of Darius (chap. 6), and the commission to Ezra (chap. 7). Further, the number of Persian words, which are subjected to a careful examination, and the Persian forms of expression apparent throughout, betray a Persian original which must have been in existence long before the time of the Chronicler. Other evidences of authenticity, as well as the details of the proof of the foregoing, must here be passed over for want of space.

As a conclusion to this chapter Meyer adds a remark upon the importance of these documents as revealing the historical occasions of the founding of Judaism. Dissenting from the current view that the new political and ecclesiastical system exhibited in the book of the law arose merely from inner necessity, he maintains that in these authentic records we see plainly the hand of the Persian government guiding and maintaining the new settlement. In like manner, according to the Egyptian tradition, Darius appears as the last great legislator of Egypt, and the chief priest of Sais repairs to Susa to secure the authority of the court to reorganize the college of sacred scribes and to set the cultus on a new footing. A like policy was pursued by the Persians towards their Greek subjects (p. 70 f.). In this conclusion it is possible that Meyer goes too far. It is one thing to say that those who introduced, or reëstablished, the legal system did so with the approval or even with the coöperation of the Persian authorities, and another thing to say that "the community in Palestine would never of its own motion have taken the law upon itself, so unpractical as it was and so regardless of mundane relations, unless it had been compelled so to do."

In chap. ii the return of the Jews, at the instance of Cyrus, which the authentic report of "Tattenai" (Ezra 5 : 6 ff.) shows to have actually occurred, is fully discussed. Then follows an explanation of the revival under Haggai and Zechariah due, as Meyer maintains, to the Messianic expectations awakened by the disturbances throughout the empire preceding the accession of Darius. Finally, against Kusters and Wellhausen, he shows that the retrospective language of Rehum to Artaxerxes (Ezra 4 : 12) refers to the company which returned with Ezra to Jerusalem, thus proving that Ezra must have preceded Nehemiah and not have come during Nehemiah's second governorship, as Kusters maintains.

Chap. iii (pp. 94-198) discusses, from the sources, "the Jewish commonwealth from the exile until Nehemiah." In this investigation the lists of the people returned from exile and settled in Judea (Neh. 7; 11; 12), whose general accuracy he upholds, play an important part. The extent of the Jewish settlement, the distribution of the settlers, the foreign elements, the political and social organization of the community, the constitution of the priesthood, are the principal remaining topics of this intensely interesting division of the book.

Chap. iv (pp. 199-234) deals with "the law book of Ezra," with the time of its introduction, with the gradual composition of "Ezra and Nehemiah," with the character of Ezra's "book of the law," with the final redaction of the historico-legal digest, with the priestly code and the Diaspora, with the Proselytes in the priestly code and the pre-exilic μέτοικοι (*gērīm*). Of the conclusions arrived at upon these weighty matters it can only be said here that Meyer opposes Wellhausen and his school also with regard to the "book of the law." Their assumption is that "the so-called Hexateuch, *i. e.*, the Pentateuch + Joshua, formed at one time a single work, sharply set off from the other historical books." This assumption is wrong . . . There never was a Hexateuch as an independent literary work, and the surviving historical literature does not fall into the two parts: Hexateuch and Judges, Samuel, Kings, but forms a single work which is divided into the two parts: Law and Earlier Prophets.

An "historical retrospect" (pp. 234-243), written with Meyer's well-known largeness of view and fine historical insight, closes the work. It is needless to commend the book as a whole to the earnest attention of students. It forces itself upon us all. As to its chief positions, so boldly taken, so ably defended, and so fully illustrated, it would be presumptuous to give a decision except after a prolonged study of the sources, the times, and the factors of the history—political, social, moral, and religious—such as the author himself has made. Upon the historical questions he is probably in the right. In this department of criticism he is unrivaled among oriental students in knowledge, in discipline, in breadth of view. As a literary critic he is not quite so strong. It appears to the present reviewer, at least, that, for example, he underestimates the sentimental character of the preaching of the second Isaiah and the Messianic prophets generally. When he ascribes the return of the Jews and the building of the temple to the revival of Messianic hopes inspired by the contemporary prophets (p. 234 f.), he on the one hand ignores the practical character and habits

of the Hebrews and their untiring devotion to their land and religion, and on the other fails to perceive that the wide and lofty prophetic style was not and was not intended to be always taken literally. Incidentally we may remark that he misunderstands (p. 108 f.) the statement of Sennacherib (Taylor Cylinder, col. III, 11 ff.) as to his treatment of the Jewish prisoners. It is really said there that he carried 200,150 persons away as captives, not that he "numbered them as spoil." Hence Meyer's basis for computing the population of the Judaite kingdom of the time is insecure.

Kosters' view of the historical situation may be regarded as overthrown. Also the critical positions of Wellhausen and Stade are in large measure discredited. Meyer seems to have rehabilitated the authority of Ezra and Nehemiah, though not at all in the traditional fashion. True, he has not thereby placed the Chronicler above suspicion in matters not depending upon accessible documentary information. But he has immensely enhanced his credit as a conservator of the records of the past. I may venture to express the opinion that a more considerate treatment will yet be extended to the Chronicler in the criticism of the preëxilic Chronicles. Who knows but that in some cases documents from among the state or temple archives may not have been used directly by him? The history of Uzziah of Judah we owe almost entirely to him; and his account, in spite of Wellhausen, Stade, and the rest, is proved to be in the main correct by outside evidence and by the historical situation which he alone could have created. Meeyr himself says that some of his own most important conclusions in the present work have been reached unexpectedly, supporting as they do the traditional views. Such open-mindedness and sympathetic impartiality are among the most encouraging signs of the time.¹

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THE EPISTLE OF JAMES AND OTHER DISCOURSES. By R. W. DALE, LL.D. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1895. Pp. ix + 315.

THIS volume, edited after Dr. Dale's death by his son, contains twenty sermons. The first ten are expositions of the epistle of James

¹ [Attention may be called to EDUARD MEYER'S pamphlet just published: *Julius Wellhausen und meine Schrift: Die Entstehung des Judenthums*. Eine Erwiderung; Halle, M. Niemeyer, 1897; 26 pp., 8vo, in which the author replies to the review by Wellhausen of this book in *Götting. Gelehrte Anzeigen*, 1897, No. 2.—ED.]